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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [KTIP](#) [PREL](#) [BE](#)
SUBJECT: GTIP DEPUTY DIRECTOR NAN KENNELLY'S MEETINGS IN
BRUSSELS AND ANTWERP

Classified By: A/DCM Richard Eason for reasons 1.4 (B) and (D).

¶1. (C) Summary. GTIP Deputy Director Nan Kennelly met October 16 with Justice Ministry officials, a federal police officer in Antwerp, and Ambassador Gutman to discuss trends in trafficking in persons (TIP) in Belgium. She also stressed to the Justice Ministry the importance of obtaining up-to date, official data from the GOB for the annual TIP report. The Justice Ministry mentioned a press conference of TIP prosecutors as evidence of Belgian efforts to raise public awareness of TIP. They also described progress on implementing the GOB's Anti-TIP Action Plan and some programs to prevent trafficking of children. They said data collection remained slow. The Antwerp police officer discussed new trends now that Bulgaria and Romania are in the European Union, and said traffickers have become steadily more sophisticated, making TIP victims harder to find and cases harder to prosecute. End Summary.

Introduction

¶2. (U) On October 16, GTIP Deputy Director Nan Kennelly met Justice Minister Stefaan De Clerck's Deputy Cabinet Director and MOJ TIP Coordinator Paule Somers, MOJ Diplomatic Advisor Piet Heirbaut, and MOJ Director of Criminal Policy Freddy Gazan in Brussels. In Antwerp, Kennelly met with Belgian Federal Police Commissioner Jeff Swartele. The purpose of Kennelly's visit was to learn how Belgium combats human trafficking in all its forms, especially sexual and labor exploitation.

Ministry of Justice

¶3. (U) The Justice Ministry officials described efforts to combat TIP in Belgium. They mentioned a press conference held by prosecutors to highlight anti-TIP efforts that day. They also provided examples of flyers they provided to work-visa applicants to warn them of the dangers of human trafficking. They said three GOB working groups work on combating TIP. There are also three government-supported shelters (located in Antwerp, Brussels, and Liege) that assist trafficking victims. The Justice Ministry said victim identification is conducted by the police and non-governmental organizations. The Ministry acknowledged that the bulk of Belgium's prevention effort is focused on child trafficking. The Justice Ministry said that because prostitution is legal in Belgium, reducing demand is not a high priority. The officials noted the challenge of providing data in a timely manner. Kennelly emphasized that law enforcement data is an essential element of TIP Report analysis and that the USG greatly appreciated the GOB's efforts to provide us with this information.

¶4. (U) According to Swartele, EU enlargement has presented new challenges for combating TIP in Antwerp. He said that as long as standards of living in new EU member states, like Bulgaria and Romania, are lower than in Belgium, human trafficking will persist. Swartele noted a reduction of violence and associated crime after Antwerp's red light district was reduced in size. However, police and prosecutors have found it increasingly difficult to investigate and prosecute TIP as organized crime groups have become more sophisticated and moved prostitution underground.

Swartele identified three key trends that have reduced victims' willingness and ability to come forth or testify: women who have already worked in prostitution in Eastern Europe are trafficked temporarily to Belgium and then rotated to another country after a few months of work; traffickers provide victims some incentive by allowing them to keep some of the money they earn, which also makes it more difficult to make a case that they were forced to engage in prostitution; and threats against families of the victims. Swartele described new efforts to identify and investigate labor trafficking. In a notable new development, the police are now working with Ministry of Labor officials to try to identify victims. Swartele said the police also work closely with victims' shelters.

Comment

¶5. (C) Kennelly's meetings with Belgian officials provided a useful review of TIP trends in Belgium. They also allowed

her to emphasize the need for Belgium to submit data in a timely manner. Post will continue to press the GOB to provide data by the deadlines established for the TIP report.

¶6. (U) This cable has been cleared by GTIP Deputy Director Kennelly.

GUTMAN

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